DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 185 195 UD 020 460

AUTHOR Loughran, Elizabeth; Reed, Horace
TITLE Nonformal Educational Methods and Materials and Their Application to Community Education.
INSTITUTION Massachusetts Univ., Amherst. School of Education.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Development; *Community Education; Educationally Disadvantaged; Educational Methods; Educational Resources; Instructional Materials; *Lifelong Learning; *Nonformal Education; *Nonschool Educational Programs

ABSTRACT

While schools focus on individual learner development, community education should focus on the quality of life in communities. Two research projects are in progress with the purpose of exploring out-of-school learning, particularly for disenfranchised populations, and aimed at community concerns. One is the development of a referencing system that opens up resources from twenty out-of-school approaches and movements. A classification and cross-referencing system is being refined to lead researchers and practitioners to resources currently labeled broadly under the rubric of out-of-school education. A second project is the development of the Lifelong Learning Scale. The scale provides a conceptual framework that allows researchers to compare and contrast the very different approaches involved in out-of-school education. It also measures the variables involved in community education programs along a continuum that ranges from formal to informal, structured to less structured, abstract to concrete. Each variable has detailed descriptors that distinguish the ends of the continuum. These projects are designed to increase the awareness of many professionals and practitioners (for example police officers and welfare workers) that they are educators, and will foster increased collaboration among agencies engaged in community education. (Author/MK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

MAR 3 1 1980

ED185195

NONFORMAL EDUCATIONAL METHODS AND MATERIALS AND THEIR APPLICATION TO COMMUNITY EDUCATION

by

Elizabeth Loughran

and

Horace Reed

Community Education Resource Center

School of Education
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Mass. 01003
1980

UD020460

ABSTRACT

Community education is described as including any agency that makes an organized, intentional effort to influence issues and concerns of communities. Thus, education is much more than schooling. It is lifelong in duration, with a major emphasis on out-of-school or nonformal educational variables. While schooling focuses on individual learner development, community education should focus on the quality of life in communities - on community development. This can and should involve the educational system of a community in complex, difficult, crucial concerns of social change. It is clear that the present practices of the community education movement are not yet designed to implement this view of a community educational system.

At the Community Education Resource Center, the School of Education, University of Massachusetts, two research projects are in progress with the purposes of exploring out-of-school learning, particularly for disenfranchised populations, and aimed at community concerns. One study is the development of a referencing system that opens up resources from some twenty out-of-school different approaches and movements. A second research is the construction of a Lifelong Learning Scale and a training program, which when used with various educational agencies, allows practitioners to explore their educational functions, using eleven pedagogical variables. The Scale is thus useful for providing data corcerning possible staff development needs in such agencies as human services, libraries, government units, businesses, and museums, as well as schools and adult education programs. Both research projects provide one basis for the construction of nonformal educational methods and materials, reflecting a participatory mode, and a broad interpretation of community education.

Nonformal Educational Methods and Materials
and their
Application to Community Education

The Community Education concept as it has been elaborated and put into practice in the years since the 1930's has greatly expanded the ability of many schools to serve the needs of all individuals, not just children. However, the potential of this concept has been limited by some of the major factors which have limited the applicability of American education in general.[1] Education in this country has for the most part been seen as schooling. The enormous potential of out-of-school education in such agencies as libraries, museums, neighborhood action groups, rural development groups, volunteer political agencies, unions, and numerous others has been largely ignored.

Equally important is the fact that school personnel have seen as their purpose, the development of the individual, with little attention to the transcending needs of communities. Even the most innovative programs developed by community schools concentrate largely on the cognitive, vocational and recreational development of individual students. Only rarely has the school involved itself in providing educational services related to community needs.

This conceptualization of education as schooling for individual development is constrictive in two important respects. First, it is premised on the same concept of individualism which spawned the "melting pot" theory, that is, all individuals in U.S. society have the same opportunity to advance to the middle or upper class. Those who managed to avoid "melting"

have been labeled misfits and "cared for" through an enormous social service industry. In other words, the individual or client is the problem, not society as a whole. Thus, it is not at all surprising that formal schooling has been least useful for the numerous minority groups and individuals who either were not allowed, or chose not to be melted.

Secondly, such a definition of education blinds practitioners to the availability of a wide variety of innovative methods and materials available through nonformal education approaches. Recognizing that education takes place in neighborhood block meetings, women's support groups, business training programs and student protest groups opens the possibility of the use of educational techniques that have not previously been used in formal schools. Nonformal educational methods and materials developed for Third World community projects, for example, are virtually unknown in this country. Yet numerous communities in the United States have the same needs for education leading to economic development, improved housing, literacy and heightened social consciousness as do those in the Third World.

The idea of education involving much more than schools and using this concept for community purposes is neither novel nor new. It was articulated by the Progressivists[2] and has been part of the theory behind the community schools idea[3] and some of the rhetoric of the community education movement.[4] The problem is that the large majority of practitioners in these movements seldom explore the social change potential beyond middle class settings. Education outside the school means little more than links with libraries, museums, or Chambers of Commerce, using such techniques as workstudy, field trips and community volunteers. Thus, education for

community development has been restricted to superficial community projects, using the school for such purposes as meetings of community organizations.

Out-of-school education aimed at critiquing the culture's social-economic-political structures and improving the quality of life for all people has almost always been the domain of private groups. Some of the private community schools founded during the depression, such as Myles Horton's Highlander Folk School,[5] were involved in major problems: unemployment, daring to link education with highly political actions including strikes and boycotts. During the 1960's, non school groups such as community action workers, consumer cooperatives' advocates, civil rights protest groups, and school decentralization groups were again the practitioners of education for community development.[6] They operated, and still do, with little recognition from the formal school system or the dominant forces of the current community education movement.

The research currently in progress at the Community Education Resource Center at the University of Massachusetts includes in its purposes exploring out-of-school learning particularly in reference to populations which have not been well served by the formal schools, and increasing the awareness of the potential of education for community as well as individual development. A first step has been the development of a classification and cross-referencing system that will enable educators involved in traditional, formal programs to become aware of relevant nonformal educational techniques. The Center is in the early stages of refining the classification system and applying it to a selection of out-of-school approaches. Currently, both the Library of Congress and the ERIC classification systems

Table I

GLOSSARY OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL TERMS

The following list suggests some of the categories of approaches as well as a number of specific examples of each that might be included in the study of out-of-school learning environments:

A. Concepts and Processes

lifelong education
community education
community development
nonformal education
appropriate technology education
experiential approaches
self-help movements
parent as educator
consumer education
religious education

B. Programs that Deliver Services

1. Educational Programs:

a. Well Established Programs:

community schools
adult education
continuing education
cooperative extension
media institutions

b. Less Well Established Programs:

alternative schools
outward bound
work study
day care

2. Other Programs with Educational Components:

a. Programs with a community improvement emphasis:

voluntary or citizen participation movements
rural development
urban neighborhood renewal
intentional communities

b. Groups in Specific Settings:

libraries
museums
labor
business-industry
military
human-social services
health care
government
foundations
parks

keep researchers and practitioners comfortably confined to their specific disciplines. The Adult Basic Education teacher, for instance, is not easily led to the work on literacy that has been carried out in fields variously labeled as community development, lifelong learning, or nonformal education. Teachers working with multicultural groups of adolescents aren't aware of the material on leadership, self-help and cultural differences developed by UNESCO organizations in the Third World or by community action groups in this country. Table I contains suggestions of the type of literatures and practices which might be fruitfully cross-referenced.

A second project has been the development of the Lifelong Learning Scale, an instrument which, combined with a training program,[7] is designed for use with non-school agencies. This project has two purposes. There is, first, the very broad need for a conceptual framework that allows researchers to compare and contrast the multitude of very different educational approaches that currently are lumped together under the rubric out-of-school education. As stated above, it is difficult for a researcher in Adult Basic Education to see an immediate usefulness in learning about a nonformal education project in Thailand. One purpose of the Lifelong Learning Scale (Table II) is to make the benefits of such a connection more obvious.

Further, all educational programs, however different on the surface, contain most of the same variables. They all have purposes, content, staff, learners, teaching-learning approaches, resources, facilities, and organizational structures. What differs, of course, is the treatment of these variables. The Lifelong Learning Scale measures each variable along a

Table II

THE LIFELONG LEARNING SCALE FOR ANALYZING EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Educational Variables	Descriptors					N/A; Comments
Objectives	5	4	3	2	1	
	Building and conservation of knowledge More cognitive More delayed			Applying knowledge for personal and community development More psychological and physical More immediate		
Content and Sequence	5	4	3	2	1	
	Abstract; symbol systems Logically organized Scholarly disciplines Predictable sequence Requirements and prerequisits			Concrete; experiential Psychologically organized Interdisciplinary Sequence less ordered Few requirements		
Time Units	5	4	3	2	1	
	Long term Full time Tightly scheduled Preset time periods			Short term Part time Flexible schedule Situational time periods		
Learners	5	4	3	2	1	
	Age selective Selection criteria predictable and more precise			Age inclusive Selection criteria less predictable and more general		
Staff	5	4	3	2	1	
	Professionals A major life ain Highly trained Distinct roles Credentials			Lay oriented Ancillary life ain Short term training Less distinct roles Noncredentialed		
Teaching-Learning Approaches	5	4	3	2	1	
	Teachers more managerial, directive More teacher dominant Learners more passive			Teachers more facilitating, advising, linking More learner dominant Learners more active		
Rewards and Evaluation	5	4	3	2	1	
	Extrinsic rewards More competitive Evaluation of knowing Product oriented Quantitative			Intrinsic rewards More cooperative Evaluation of performance Process oriented Qualitative		

7

Educational Varaible	Descriptor	N/A; Comments
Curriculum Materials and Resources	5 4 3 2 1 Complex technology Commercial production Written and spoken media Simpler technology Local production Multi-media	
Financial Resources	5 4 3 2 1 Larger expenditures per learner Long term investment Mostly government sponsored More elaborate accounting procedures Less flexible allocations Smaller expenditures per learner Short term investment Varied sponsors Less elaborate accounting procedures More flexible allocations	
Building Resources	5 4 3 2 1 Major permanent constructions Specific, set spaces High maintenance cost Less often user constructed Minor temporary constructions Flexible spaces Less maintenance cost More often user constructed	
Power, Control and Administration	5 4 3 2 1 More bureaucratic More hierarchical Power partly a function of status and resources Decision making by role Workers in established organizations Leaders viewed as managers More personal More horizontal Power largely a function of competency Decision making shared Workers less organized Leaders viewed as coordinators	

continuum which, broadly speaking, ranges from formal to nonformal, structured to less structured, abstract to concrete. In addition, each variable has detailed descriptors that distinguish the ends of each continuum. Thus, researchers interested in Adult Basic Education can recognize such key areas as goals, content, nature of learners and time available as shared with international nonformal education projects and benefit from the new perspective. Such cross-fertilization of ideas has great potential for increasing the effectiveness of preservice and inservice staff training, and for constructing innovative materials.

On a more practical level, there is a need to increase the awareness of many professionals and practitioners (policemen, welfare workers, government officials, volunteers, health and legal professionals, community organizers) that they are educators. It is one thing to note the prevalence of out-of-school education and another thing to mobilize its effectivenss in working with long-standing community problems. Heightening consciousness about staff members' many roles is a powerful tool for increasing both personal learning and effectiveness.[8] Staff training with community organizers and workers can help establish their identity as educators who have interesting methods and materials to share, and can enhance their ability to assist community members with the varied learning tasks necessary to the success of community development projects.

Another potential benefit from both these research projects is their capability of fostering increased collaboration. While collaboration seems very difficult within any one field because of "turf" issues, it is more likely to occur among different agencies when the collaboration involves a peripheral rather than central function. Thus a probation officer, welfare worker, clergyman and Division of Employment Security employee might colla-

borate more easily in their roles as educators than in their often conflicting roles involving a client's employment. Given the scarcity of resources aggravated by severe inflation that now characterizes the U.S. economy, it is essential to foster and focus such collaboration to reduce duplication.

Both of these research projects are at their beginning stages, as is the exploration of similar conceptual shifts in the Community Education movement as a whole. The Community Education Resource Center welcomes dialogue with any who share our interest in out-of-school learning aimed at enhancing the quality of life for whole communities, as well as for the individuals within them.

NOTES

1. Horace Reed and Elizabeth Loughran, 'Creative Tensions: School and Community Relations in North America.' To be published in International Review of Education. (1980)

2. Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961.

3. Samuel Everett (Ed.), The Community School. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938.

4. Mario D. Fantini, Elizabeth L. Loughran and Horace B. Reed, 'Community Education for the 1980's: A Need for Theory and Research.' To be published in Community Education Journal. (April 1980).

5. Donald Oliver, Education and Community: A Radical Critique of Innovative Schooling. Berkeley, California: McCalehan, 1976.

6. William W. Biddle and Loureide J. Biddle, The Community Development Process: The Rediscovery of Local Initiative. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965.

7. Horace B. Reed and Elizabeth L. Loughran, Lifelong Learning Scale: Training Manual. University of Massachusetts, 1980. (Unpublished monograph).

8. See for instance, Warren Bennis, Kenneth D. Benne, and Robert Chin, The Planning of Change, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969; Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, New York: The Seabury Press, 1970; Carl R. Rogers, Freedom to Learn, Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Pub. Company, 1969; Earl C. Kelly, Education for What Is Real. New York: Hayes Brothers, 1947.